



Flathead City-County Board of Health  
1035 First Ave. West Kalispell, MT 59901  
(406) 751-8101 FAX 751-8102  
[flathead.mt.gov/ems](http://flathead.mt.gov/ems)

# FCEMS Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes of June 2, 2008

6:00 – 7:30 pm

Health Department Conference Room – Earl Bennett Building

---

## Summary

- Overview of Sacco Triage implementation in Flathead Valley.
- Sharps disposal program set up.
- Creston response district transport improvements through mutual aid with Evergreen Fire and Bigfork Ambulance.
- Marion Fire on-line with BLS transport capability.
- Bigfork Ambulance efficiency improvement in rapidly identifying ALS / BLS response capability for interaction with dispatching ALS when needed.
- Mill levy budgets reviewed and discussed. Capital Improvement Plan discussed.
- FCEMS regulations delivered in final form to attendees – will be delivered to BOH for approval.
- Unit mill levy funding discussed and clarified.
- The next committee meeting will be June 30th.

## Action Items from This Meeting:

1. Provide feedback, suggestions, proposals, and plans to address response and transport issues. (Everyone in Flathead County EMS)
2. Sacco Triage implementation (Bates)
3. Medical Directors meeting (Briles, McFadden, Miller)
4. Sharps disposal program (Boehm). [Policy emailed to FCEMS Units 6/9/08]
5. Send FCEMS regulations to BOH for approval (Russell)
6. Special funding request form (Russell)
7. Notifications to units regarding allocated funds status (Boehm) [Completed 6/10/08]
8. Response district boundary review for West Valley Fire (Peck)

---

It is the mission of the Flathead City-County Health Department to assure the conditions in which people can be healthy through collaboration, education, promoting stewardship of our resources, and providing preventative health services to our community.

**Attendees:**

Art Bielz	Representing BLS Non-Transporting Units
Marty Boehm	FCEMS
Richard Briles	Representing KRMC Off-line Medical Director
James Brower	Marion Fire
Rod Dresbach	West Valley Fire
DC Haas	Representing ALS Transport Units (Alternate for Randy Brodehl)
Gary Mahugh	Creston Fire
Jen May	Representing BLS Transport Units (Alternate for Mary Granger)
Ken McFadden	Representing NVH Off-line Medical Director
Wayne Miller	Board of Health
Tracy Norred	Bigfork Ambulance
Joe Russell	FC Health Officer
Lela Sistok	Representing BLS Non-Transporting Units
Gary Solomon	FCEMS
Wendy Stefaniak	Badrock Fire
Eda Taylor	Bigfork Ambulance
Bill Tidwell	Representing BLS Non-Transporting Units
Kim Vierra-Diehl	West Valley Fire
Bob Waddell	Sacco Triage
Craig Williams	Representing BLS Transport Units

**Meeting Agenda**

1. Everyone involved with Flathead County EMS is encouraged to provide feedback, suggestions, proposals, and plans to address response and transport issues.
2. The Advisory Committee members/attendees are requested to help generate the criteria for (mill levy) funding priorities as well as define those priorities.
3. The one-mill and two-mill budgets will be presented at the next meeting.
4. The regulations will be reformatted for “codification” and sent to the BOH for approval.

## Meeting Minutes

Joe Russell opened the meeting by introducing Bob Waddell (Vice President - Emergency Preparedness and Response; "The Sacco Triage Methodology"; ThinkSharp, Inc) and asked him to give an update on the county Sacco Triage program. Waddell described the Sacco Triage Methodology and estimated that fifty percent of Flathead County providers have been trained. KFD is about 90% trained. About 75-80% of the implementation process is complete. Sacco Triage does not change anyone's protocols or destination policies. The governor's office wants a report on the Flathead Valley experience with this methodology and implementation. Boehm asked what the schedule would be for implementation. Waddell said he wants to begin collecting data next Monday, June 9, 2008. He also estimated that FCEMS being fully prepared to handle triage for a Mass Casualty Incident will take about a year, targeting June 1, 2009.

Russell asked for any agenda items for this meeting. McFadden asked about getting the medical directors together. Russell talked about the Trauma Coordination Committee. Sistok asked for information about funding special requests. Russell responded that he will cover that later in this meeting. Taylor asked some questions about specific terms in the demographics survey and about a used sharps disposal program. Russell stated that FCCHD uses outside vendors to dispose of sharps. He said that if units needed help disposing of sharps, to contact the Health Dept. with some prior notice and they will help with disposal. Taylor asked about the plans for using the Demographic survey data and if it would be an annual data request. There were questions asking for definitions of the types of calls used in the demographic survey since people might interpret the categories differently. Russell confirmed that annual data will most likely be requested.

Boehm prompted Craig Williams to tell their "success story". Williams described how Evergreen Fire, Creston Fire, and Bigfork Ambulance identified a region that needed "some work" (regarding transport) and through mutual agreement with the affected units developed a response plan. Evergreen will cover the north part of the Creston district for transport. Bigfork Ambulance has expanded their response region about a mile to the north to support Creston's southern region. Mahugh emphasized that this project was community based rather than mandated. The new plan is targeted to go into effect June 15 rather than May 1 as previously hoped. All of the plans were made in agreement with Kalispell Fire Department. A request has been submitted for funding a special project for a transport unit for backup. Tidwell reiterated that they are trying to remain focused on patient care while dealing with the issues and negotiations of this mutual aid plan. McFadden asked if they solved their issues with shared billing for transport. Mahugh replied that is still being worked on.

Boehm noted that Marion Fire went on-line with their transport capability recently. Brower said they went on-line Friday (5/30) and had their first (BLS) call Sunday morning.

Norred said that Bigfork Ambulance now has calendars in all their rigs identifying Paramedic availability to facilitate notification for ALS support if required. She said dispatch info is sometimes not accurate enough to determine BLS versus ALS response. Mahugh said that we can expect improved dispatch information with the 911 enhancement program underway. Norred asked if the "A to E" response designations might be changed to new dispatch protocols. Mahugh answered yes and they will be more flexible than the current ones.

Russell moved on to the next topic to review the mill levy budgets. The first mill levy funds are applied to coordination and education services. This (1 Mill) budget is:

- \$30,000 – support position salary & benefits (education office coordinator)

- \$96,000 – contractor salaries (county EMS medical director, education coordinator, instructors, and testing contractors. About 2/3 is used for the first two positions)

- \$ 9,000 – education supplies

- \$ 5,000 – non-durable (disposable) medical supplies

- \$ 5,000 – operations (AEDs)

\$ 5,000 – other (phones, office equipment and supplies)

=====

\$150,000 Total (1 mill  $\approx$  \$192,000 so this has not been fully levied.)

Russell talked about the ability to increase the taxed amount (up to the upper mill levy limit) based on justifiable need. Briles asked about funding instructors / RNs to provide unit training. Dresbach, Sistok, and Stepaniak all commented favorably about this idea and stated that they would make good use of this training.

Russell outlined the 2 Mill budget:

\$100,000 – “Small item” equipment

\$202,000 – other contracted services

----- These two items are “allocated to units” based on requests. These are not special request items.

\$ 40,000 – Board of Health / special requests / set aside funds

\$ 50,000 – transfer to CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) i.e. sinking fund

=====

\$392,000 Total = 2 mills

Last year \$287,000 was levied (equaling 1.5 mills) because of unspent funds. Russell talked about budgeting and CIP funds. CIP funds cannot be used for operational budget items.

Dresbach noted that a \$25,000 limit for CIP funding basically supports only transport units. Russell answered basically yes, but that modifications to that amount have occurred in the past. He also noted that CIP amounts are budgeted items. McFadden talked with Russell about the flexibility of the CIP funds. Russell noted that the CIP is county money authorized by the Board of Health and that none of these funds support FCCHD.

Haas asked about the difference between the 1 mill \$96k and 2 mill \$202k for contracted services. Russell explained that the 1 mill \$96k pays for the county EMS medical director and FCEMS education coordinator and instructors. The 2 mill \$202k is a somewhat undefined category regarding the specific items each unit will spend that money on.

Russell noted that the FCEMS Regulations are ready to deliver (6/13/08) to the Board of Health for their 6/19/08 meeting and then they will go to the commissioners. The current version of the regulations was passed out to everyone in attendance. Russell asked that they be reviewed and any inputs be made before Friday, 6/13.

Russell stated that he wanted to explain more of the issues relating to the last levy which was lower than the maximum allowed. The tax money / revenues come in twice a year – end of May and end of November. He asked the units to keep this in mind when formulating next year’s requests and to consider alternatives to allocating funds. He wants to formulate a special request form to help manage the “balancing act” of requests versus revenue timing. He talked about sharing information better to project funding and budgeting. Notifications of unspent or unrequested allocated funds are to be sent to the relevant units. Stepaniak asked that this notification include email since some units do not get paper mail picked up in a timely manner.

Boehm mentioned the issue of funding requests which include salaries. Russell restated to not ask for money for salaries because it generates a major accounting issue and leads to rejected requests. Stepaniak asked if one could request a contracted instructor.

Miller asked about historical allocations to units regarding funds being delivered without discussion or challenges. Russell replied that both cases have occurred. Miller stated that there will be review of all requests in the future. McFadden asked a question relating to the same approach for the special request funds.

Russell said there will be some rating criteria for special request funds.

Dresbach asked if it was safe to assume a five percent growth in next fiscal year's budget. Russell said to project five percent but this is probably the last significant increase.

Russell asked for comments to wrap up the meeting. Taylor asked if 2.0 mills will be levied next year. Russell – yes. Taylor asked if line item transfers may be made and Russell indicated no.

Russell said that he will find out soon about a minimum dollar amount for a CIP sinking fund.

Mahugh asked if a notification will be forthcoming for units' requests to close out this fiscal year.

Dresbach reiterated the need to review boundaries and response areas to clarify them. This will be an agenda item at the next meeting.

Mahugh described the meeting that was held with the affected units for the Creston transport improvement plan and noted that it seemed to be a first and has gone well so far. Miller applauded the effort and outcome.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 30.